

La Monte Young  
The Forever Bad Blues Band  
Just Stompin'



Live at The Kitchen

La Monte Young

The Forever Bad Blues Band

"Tapped into some primal blues essence: boogie woogie, shuffles and stomps, country blues, Chicago electric blues, heavy metal, punk, noise, raga, modal jazz/blues, bebop, trudge, grunge and thrash all coexist, layered into the music throughout, in constant flux between overt expression and occultation." — Robert Palmer, *Liner Notes*

"Never has such wildly energetic music moved so slowly." — Kyle Gann, *The Village Voice*

"...reconciles the hypnosis of Minimal Music with the force of Heavy Metal, the attack of Punk, and the contemplative density of Indian music." — Peter Kemper, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

"...roadhouse blues rock, leavened with a jazz sense of improvisation." — Peter Watrous, *The New York Times*

**La Monte Young  
The Forever Bad Blues Band  
Just Stompin'  
Live at The Kitchen**

93 1 14 ca. 8:54 - ca. 10:54:17 PM NYC

Young's Dorian Blues in G (B<sub>1</sub> = 60 Hz) (c. 1960-61-present)

La Monte Young Korg Synthesizer in just intonation  
Jon Catler Just Intonation and Fretless Guitar  
Brad Catler Just Intonation and Fretless Bass  
Jonathan Kane Drums  
Marian Zazeela Light Design

Recorded Live and Mixed Direct to Digital  
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*Young's Dorian Blues In G* composed by La Monte Young.

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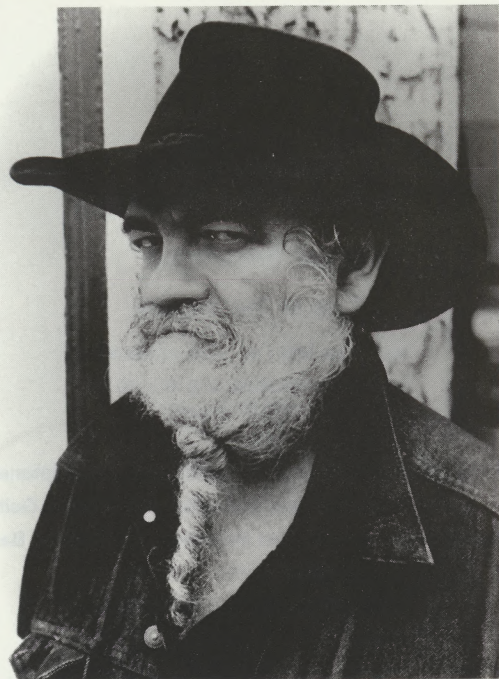
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*Front cover photos: The Forever Bad Blues Band; Back cover and inlay card photos: La Monte Young. American premiere performance series, The Kitchen, New York, January 14, 1993. Photos: Jim Conti.*

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La Monte Young, Berlin, February 1992, a few weeks before the world premiere of *The Forever Bad Blues Band* at Ursula Block's Gelbe Musik 10th Anniversary celebration. Photo: René Block.

## La Monte Young / The Forever Bad Blues Band at The Kitchen

Robert Palmer

The roadhouse was rocking. Orpheus — the archetypal rambling bluesman, king of the animals, and all-around steady-rolling man — was wailing from the joint's makeshift bandstand, breaking a sweat that was slowly turning the road dust clinging to his clothing into thick river-bottom mud. The crowd packed the dance floor. Over in a corner, the heat got the better of Elder Brown, who was so drunk he kept trying to pick a fight. At the bar, the music and the scene so bemused the undercover cop that he flashed his badge in front of the locals. A few began looking around wildly, trying to spot the nearest exit, but most of them ignored the provocation. "Stomp it down to the bricks," they yelled, and Orpheus obliged by shaking the roadhouse into a low-down groove. Pythagoras heard the commotion from the blacksmith's shop nearby, and added to it with hammers, tongs, and anvils, the clarity of the resulting harmonic ratios ringing out like a metallic music of the spheres.

Out back of the smithy, an immense high-tension line stepdown transformer hummed and pulsed an oceanic 60-cycle drone. La Monte Young, who had been sitting cross-legged on the ground, his consciousness wholly immersed in the sound of the transformer, slowly got to his feet, hearing everything — Orpheus, Pythagoras, the rhythmic stomping that was shivering the roadhouse timbers, the transformer's robust whine. He checked the clamorous machine shop next door, satisfying himself that the stampers and drill presses were all perfectly in tune, and then strode purposefully toward the roadhouse. The machine shop's drone harmonized beautifully with the other sounds Young was hearing; momentarily, he seemed lost in thought. "This could be a really accurate tuning for *Young's Dorian Blues in G*," he mused, "with the blues 7:6 minor third B, reinforcing the fundamental harmonic resonance of the continental power grid..." He entered the roadhouse; in his biker jacket

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Robert Palmer, former Chief Pop Critic for *The New York Times* and a Contributing Editor for *Rolling Stone*, is the author of four books, including the award-winning *Deep Blues*. He was writer, narrator, and music director for director Robert Mugge's film *Deep Blues*, and produced the soundtrack album for Atlantic Records. He served as writer and co-director for another documentary film, *The World According to John Coltrane*, and produces Mississippi blues albums for the Fat Possum label. He lives in New Orleans.



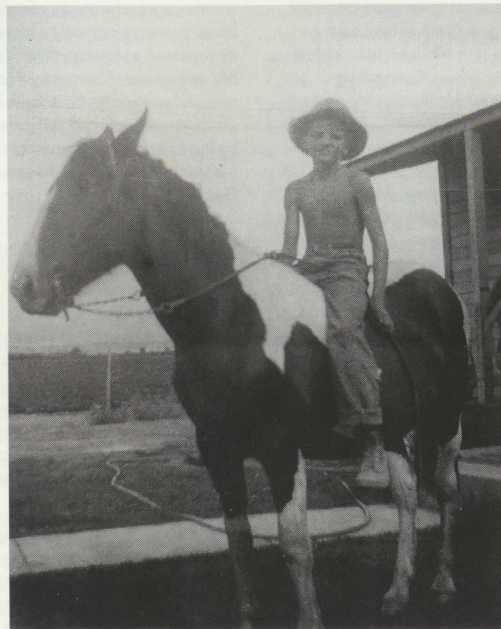
and leather gloves, with a purple bandanna tied around his head, he fit right in. When Orpheus finally took a break and headed for the bar, Young approached him. "I'm recruiting musicians," he explained, "for this really *bad* blues band..."

The genesis of La Monte Young's Forever Bad Blues Band may not have been *quite* this mythic, but this is the way I like to *envision* it, my *theory*, if you will. "The word 'theory' comes from the Greek word 'theoria' and means literally view, vision, or consideration," writes Joscelyn Godwin in his commentary on Michael Maier's 17th century alchemical treatise *Atalanta Fugiens*. "Thus Musica theoretica is a consideration of the number-proportions which form the basis of audible sounds. On the ancient musical instrument called the monochord, the sounds were measured by the proportional shortenings of the string-length. The measurements and proportions which can be found in this way were considered in Antiquity and the Middle Ages as the primary principles . . . of the whole world's existence, which manifests itself in a pattern of numbers that one can not only grasp conceptually but also hear."

Extrapolating from harmonic *theory*, both ancient and modern, La Monte Young has *re-envisioned* the blues. In a sense, he has been working on this project all his life. His interest in natural resonance harmonics was

stimulated at an early age when he listened to the sounds made by the wind blowing across Bear Lake, and through the chinks in his family's Idaho log cabin. When he discovered the much more definite harmonic drone of the stepdown transformer behind his Grandfather Grandy's gas station, he fell in love with it. In his teens he listened to the sound of the seventh partial resonating over Utah Lake, activated by the voices of owls in the offshore woods. Later, after the Youngs had moved to Los Angeles, he listened to the composite drone of the machine shop where he worked, hearing precise pitch relationships where most people heard only racket. In New York during the early sixties, Young's performing group (with Marian Zazeela, John Cale, Tony Conrad, and Angus MacLise) pitched its improvisations to the 60-cycle hum of an amplified aquarium motor. The content and structure of these group improvisations was primarily derived from the blues.

Although blues is considered a simple musical form by listeners who equate complexity with equal-tempered melody and cadential harmony, Young worked at simplifying it still further, emphasizing its static or drone qualities. This tendency was already evident in his earliest jazz composition, *Annod*, from the mid-fifties, a blues with superimposed modal scales. George Russell, Miles Davis, and John Coltrane were beginning to explore a similar



La Monte Young, ca. 1946-47 at age 11 or 12, in front of his family's farm house in American Fork where he used to ride his horse near the shore of Utah Lake and hear the phenomenon which he would later realize was harmonic resonances reflecting off the water and echoing in the woods with an emphasis on the seventh partial.

direction, but their interest in increasingly static harmonies and blues modality served as the scaffolding on which they would erect musical structures with a new order of complexity. Young was more interested in *stripping away* complexities to reveal the substrata of pure tone and pure form beneath. His discovery of Indian classical music in the late fifties confirmed the validity of his own evolving approach. In Indian music, modal scales are superimposed on a fundamental drone, a process which is regulated by the traditional association of specific scalar forms with times of day, seasons of the year, and associated emotional and psychological states. As he studied Indian music under Pandit Pran Nath, Young learned that certain Indian ragas or scale-forms posit melodic configurations and associated moods that are recognizably the blues. (Pythagoras, too, is said to have studied in India before his epiphany in the blacksmith's shop inspired him to formulate ancient Greek harmonic theory.)

But music in which modal scales are superimposed on a one-chord drone has also figured prominently in the blues tradition, from early Mississippi Delta musicians such as Charley Patton and Son House to electric boogie king John Lee Hooker to the elusive One-String Sam and his homemade monochord (another Pythagorean parallel). Despite its circumscribed harmonic

vocabulary and melodic range, this drone-blues is only apparently simple. In addition to its rhythmic complexities, it conceals within the interstices of its pentatonic melodies a microtonal melodic language, involving shadings of pitch that are precisely calibrated by the singer or instrumentalist according to a system of emotional correspondences. Generally, a flattening of pitch indicates an intensification of feeling, as in some West African pitch-tone languages. As is the case in Indian music, there is a *science* being applied here. If you were to transcribe a traditional Delta blues performance accurately, using a microtonal notation, you would probably end up with a system very much like the tuning employed by The Forever Bad Blues Band. Blues is *inherently* a microtonal, non-equal-tempered music, which may help explain why the tuning employed by Young and his band sounds more like the blues than an exercise in just intonation.

This is precisely Young's intention. The high priest of the postmodern musical developments somewhat misleadingly labelled "minimalism," always an attentive student of the psychoacoustical events that color our perception of the simplest sine wave tone, Young has too much respect for the blues and other apparently simple music to want to dress it up. He commented recently that his just-intonation keyboard playing in the Forever Bad

Blues Band context "should sound as if it's coming out of authentic blues piano playing. The music is based in serious blues lore; I'm just evolving it into a natural implication of the roots. Peter Watrous wrote (in *The New York Times*) that we were playing 'roadhouse blues/rock,' and I like that description; that's definitely a part of what we're doing."

Stylistically, this "roadhouse blues/rock" covers a lot of territory. Among them, Young and his Forever Bad Blues Band cohorts have had experience of boogie woogie, shuffles and stomps, country blues, Chicago electric blues, heavy metal, punk, noise, raga, modal jazz/blues (note guitarist Jon Catler's extended quote from "Summertime"), bebop, trudge, grunge, thrash...the list goes on. These influences don't pop up sequentially so much as they coexist, layered into the music throughout, in constant flux between overt expression and occultation.

The music that results from all this input, theoretical and practical, is very much a group music. But without these particular musicians The Forever Bad Blues Band would most likely have remained a visionary gleam in Young's eyes. Jon Catler has integrated his Berklee chops, microtonal intonation and theory, and idiomatic blues feel into a radically original voice. The astonishing thing about his 49-notes-to-the-octave guitar tuning is that it pulls his sound and his ideas away from the

manicured surfaces and glib articulation that often come with his kind of chops and into a scrappier, more juke joint tonality. Brad Catler's experience playing Indian, Chinese, and Celtic instruments in their indigenous tunings meshes with his groove-focusing time and melodic inventiveness in another wholly individual new musical persona. Jonathan Kane's background, which ranges from early blues gigs opening for Muddy Waters to the acid-bath grindcore of the Swans to the mutant country blues stomps of ex-Captain Beefheart guitarist Gary Lucas, makes him this band's ideal drummer. Working together as a unit, these musicians strike a fine balance between finesse and brutality.

Young has described the band's sound as "an organically seething mass of rhythm and texture," noting that "I don't even think of the guitar as the *lead*; more as the *top*. I wanted to get away from a solo-after-solo approach, which I think is kind of dated." This is entirely in keeping with blues music's traditional processes. Even the most apparently innovative aspects of The Forever Bad Blues Band's music have their blues precedents. The rolling 24/16 rhythmic framework and variable chorus lengths, for example, bear comparison with a pre-World War Two train-mimicking piano blues, "Number 29" by Wesley Wallace. And Young's glorious, extended piano tremolos, which he calls



"clouds," can be fleetingly reminiscent of Huey "Piano" Smiths' celebrated work on the mid-fifties Smiley Lewis single "I Hear You Knocking." These are not blues recordings familiar to Young; the fact that his music rings such bells in the mind of an experienced blues listener is simply additional evidence that he has tapped into some primal blues essence.

The music of The Forever Bad Blues Band represents Young's latest contribution to the ongoing dialogue with his plugged-in rock and roll progeny. Out of Young's early sixties performing group came most of the original lineup of the Velvet Underground, a band that syncretized the sounds of the machine shop and the blues bar and eventually inspired several generations of sonic rockers. In the early eighties, Rhys Chatham's and Glenn Branca's compositions for massed electric guitars in just intonation became a finishing school for a new breed of rock musicians who went on to challenge the hegemony of equal temperament — Sonic Youth, Band of Susans. These bands, along with a slew of compatriots from the U.S., England and Europe, have been moving from the "alternative" rock ghetto into the mainstream, bringing with them an elaborate lore of non-equal-tempered guitar tunings that ultimately derives from Young's groundbreaking work.

In a recent *Village Voice* article, Kyle Gann rephrased a statement originally made by microtonal composer Ben Johnston: "One cause of society's problems is that people grow up bathed in loud rock in the usual equal-tempered tuning, and...the irrational intervals of that tuning create an unconsciously disturbing disharmony in the ear." If that's the case (and didn't Plato say something similar?), then the growing tendency in rock toward a more just/Pythagorean tuning approach is a welcome development indeed. And Young's pioneering, systematic investigation of ancient, non-Western, and other tuning alternatives qualifies as a public service.

Now, with The Forever Bad Blues Band, Young is reminding his rock and roll "children," as well as the rest of us, of the basic blues verities. Looking back over his career as a composer, it's evident that he was zeroing in on the core of the blues experience all along, moving from an early concern with macro-structure (the blues chorus, blues modes) to micro-structure (the microtonal architecture of melodic language and syntax). And this is perhaps the essence of Young's singular contribution to the music of our time: like a sonic archaeologist, he is always digging for fundamental truths. And finding them.

## The Forever Bad Blues Band

La Monte Young

The music the Forever Bad Blues Band plays, *Young's Blues*, is one of the ancestral lineages of my music and, as such, I hope it can be an introduction to lead even broader audiences to the complete spectrum of my more complex works.

The subtitle for Robert Palmer's 1975 *Rolling Stone* article, "La Monte Young: Lost in the Drone Zone" was "When La Monte Young Says 'Take It From The Top' He Means Last Wednesday." This subtitle referred to a Sound and Light Environment at Galerie Heiner Friedrich, Köln, in which I had set frequencies from *Map of 49's Dream The Two Systems of Eleven Sets of Galactic Intervals Ornamental Lightyears Tracery* into a structure of 12-bar blues where each chord change lasted for one day, and the entire pattern of chord changes repeated itself every 12 days.

It may come as a surprise to some to find that I consider much of my music either to be blues-based, or to have a strong relationship to blues. Even such complex works as *Map of 49's Dream The Two Systems of Eleven Sets of Galactic Intervals Ornamental Lightyears Tracery*, *The Well-Tuned Piano*, and some of my most recent sound environments have this characteristic, and it speaks for the enormous

vitality and power of the blues and its contribution to music.

*Young's Blues* is a work which I used to perform in L.A. and Berkeley, California in the late '50s and in New York in the early '60s in a piano style of my own invention. One of the origins of *Young's Blues* was my use of the following chord changes when I played blues in 12 bars:

```
| I7 / / / | I7 / / / | I7 / / / | I7 / / / |  
| IV7 / / / | IV7 / / / | I7 / / / | I7 / / / |  
| V7 / / / | IV7 / / / | I7 / / / | I7 / / / |
```

This pattern of progressions already gave even the 12-bar form of blues a more static sound because of the six sequential bars on the I<sup>7</sup> chord across bars 11 through 4 achieved through the elimination of the IV<sup>7</sup> chord traditionally played in bar 2, and the elimination of the I<sup>7</sup> / IV<sup>7</sup> / I<sup>7</sup> / V<sup>7</sup> / I sequence usually played in bars 11 and 12. Additionally, the fact that the I chord was always a I<sup>7</sup> chord, allowed a diatonic consistency which suggested a stronger, more static sense of modality.

At first, I played blues in more traditional blues modal scales. Gradually, I began to play blues in other modal scales. The process for this kind



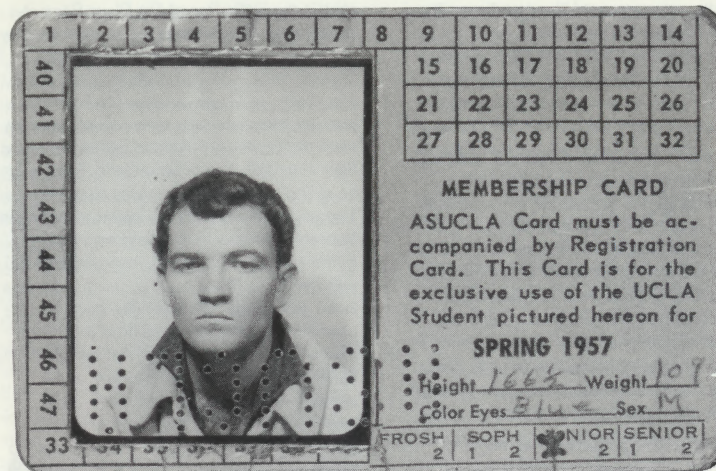
of modal thinking had already begun to evolve in my earliest jazz composition, *Annod*, ca. 1953-55, a blues set in special minor modes. In *Annod*, the modal scale C D E<sub>b</sub> F G A<sub>b</sub> B<sub>b</sub> C can be used as the basis for improvisations to be played across measures 1, 2, 3, 7, and measures 11 and 12 of the second ending. The modal scale C D E<sub>b</sub> F G A<sub>b</sub> B<sub>b</sub> C can be used as the basis for improvisations across measures 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and measures 11 and 12 of the first ending. For measure 4, the scale C D<sub>b</sub> E<sub>b</sub> F G A<sub>b</sub> B<sub>b</sub> C D<sub>b</sub> E<sub>b</sub> is well-suited for the improvisations. In other words, a particular modal scale could be played through a few measures of chord changes, and then it was necessary to change to another modal scale to accommodate the next set of chord changes. Thus, in *Annod* it was necessary to play more than one modal scale to go through the complete 12 bars of chord changes.

*Young's Blues*, however, was usually set in *only one* modal scale. I selected modes which could be played in their traditional diatonic form, without chromatic alterations, and which would be harmonically correct throughout all of the three chord changes: I<sup>7</sup>, IV<sup>7</sup>, and V<sup>7</sup>. The modes I played in most frequently were Dorian for *Dorian Blues* and Aeolian for *Aeolian Blues*. I usually played *Young's Aeolian Blues* in B<sub>b</sub> and often played *Young's Dorian Blues* in G. At some point, I began to spend long periods of time on each chord, and not be concerned

about counting how many measures had passed, giving a much more drone-like effect. Eventually, this combination of harmonic stasis and modal emphasis led to the genre of *Young's Blues*.

*Young's Blues* is characterized by a rhythmic, chordal, drone-piano style of modal blues in which the chord progression, I, IV, I, V, IV, I, is retained as a sequence, but the time duration for each chord is improvised, allowing longer periods of time on each chord change to emphasize the modal drone aspects of the music.

It has been difficult to determine the date I first began to play *Young's Blues* on the piano. Since the genre of *Young's Blues* is improvised and had never been notated, there was not even a piece of paper to correlate with an event in time, and I have had to rely completely on my memories and the memories of colleagues. Terry Riley remembers that he would often hear me playing blues in the practice rooms at Berkeley. He said at first I was always playing funky bebop in the right hand over some sort of walking bass in the left hand. But then one day at his house on Potrero Hill he remembers I played him the "chunk chunk-ka chunk chunk-ka" style of *Young's Blues* and said, "This is something new I'm working on." Terry said that after this time, he never heard me play blues any other way. He lived on Potrero Hill in 1958-59, but



La Monte Young's UCLA ID card, Spring 1957. The mid-to-late '50s were the years of the beginnings of *Young's Blues*. Copyright © La Monte Young 1990.

he thinks this was in 1959 because he knew me better then.

I, however, remember an incident at L.A. City College when I think I was already playing *Young's Blues*. Leonard Stein used to let me practice on the good pianos at L.A. City College. One day I was playing a kind of hard

blues which I recall to be in the style of *Young's Blues*. Leonard Stein came down the hall, came in and said, "Don't bang on the piano." I tried to explain to him that it was necessary to play this way to get the right sound. He said, "Okay. Bang away, then," and left abruptly. In the mid-'70s when Leonard arranged for me to play a tape recording of a



full length performance of *The Well-Tuned Piano* at California Institute for the Arts, he generously complemented me on my touch. I later realized that this incident at the piano room had been one of my greatest lessons from Leonard regarding touch at the keyboard.

A young tenor saxophonist, Michael Lara, and I became good friends and played jazz together during the period that we were both studying at L.A. City College. Michael deduced that although he started at L.A. City College in 1954, we probably spent the most time together in 1955. Michael recalls the incident with Leonard and thinks that I had played the "chunk-ka chunk" style of *Young's Blues* for as long as he had known me. This suggests that the earliest known date of origin of this style is possibly around 1955.

There is one other possible earlier origin for *Young's Blues*, however. Terry Jennings and I both went to John Marshall High School, although not in the same years. In September 1953, I entered Los Angeles City College and at the same time Terry Jennings entered John Marshall High School. Hal Hooker, a valve trombone player who was still going to Marshall, raved about the new young alto player at school and brought me a tape of Terry. It was unbelievable. In the tenth grade Terry was playing chord changes in the style of Lee Konitz as if he were a fully evolved jazz musician. One night I was playing jazz alto

chair in the Willie Powell Big Blues Band at a dance party. They used to like to have me play alto solos in front of the band. That night I found in the sax section another young white alto player, and I was surprised to find out it was *the* Terry Jennings, whom I had heard so much about. We arranged to get together and have a session. We organized the session to be at David Sanchez' (Gordo's) studio in Toonerville. Gordo was the leader of a gang in Toonerville and an incredible prize-winning trombonist who had already been on the road with the Perez Prado band by the time he was in the 10th grade. He could play anything and used to come to school and drink a quart of beer every morning in Band, first period, driving the band leader crazy. In any case, at the session, I played some piano while Terry played alto, and Terry really liked my piano playing. While it is difficult if not impossible to remember exactly what I played, it seems highly likely that it could have been the beginnings of at least the rhythmic element of *Young's Blues* because 1) there was no drummer or bass player at the session and the style of *Young's Blues* helps to supply the necessary rhythmic support when these instruments are not present; 2) I did most of my early *Young's Blues* playing with Terry playing alto. This session must have been sometime in the fall of 1953 or, at the latest, sometime in 1954. Nonetheless, it is by no means certain that this session was the beginnings of the style of *Young's Blues*.

I remember a very inspired session which took place at Terry's parents' house in Eagle Rock, Los Angeles at which Terry played alto, Michael Lara played tenor, Dennis Johnson played hichiriki, and I played piano. Dennis and Michael and I have deduced that the event probably took place not later than September or early October 1960. This session was important to me because it was the only time that these three of my closest early musical associates played *Young's Blues* with me all at the same time.

I first recorded *Young's Aeolian Blues* in Summer 1961 with Terry Jennings on alto saxophone and myself on piano. Between 1960 and 1963, I also used to play *Young's Blues* in E on guitar to accompany Terry Jennings, but we never recorded it. John Cale learned the static rhythmic aspect of this style from me and later played guitar accompaniment to Terry's soprano saxophone when they shared a loft together on Lispenard Street in Tribeca in 1963-64 and, fortunately, they recorded one example of this guitar version.

The structure I had created for blues in *Young's Blues* back in L.A. in the late '50s became the basis for all of the blues played by The Theatre of Eternal Music during the period in the early '60s when I played soprano saxophone with the group. For instance, my compositions, *Dorian Blues*, *Sunday Morning Blues* and *Early Tuesday*

*Morning Blues*, were all in this style of playing blues, but texturally different in that I was usually playing soprano saxophone instead of the rhythmic drone style of piano. I taught this technique to the performers in The Theatre of Eternal Music, which at that time included Marian Zazeela, voice drone; Tony Conrad, violin and bowed guitar; John Cale, viola and three-string drone; and Angus MacLise, hand drums. Marian, Tony and John sustained the chord changes while I improvised extremely fast sets of combination permutations on specific constellations of tones based on the chord changes, and Angus played a rhythmic complement.

At the time I originated this genre of blues playing, I hadn't thought of the title *Young's Blues*. However, by 1981 I had begun to feature a style related to the style that was to become entitled *Young's Blues* in "The Magic Harmonic Rainforest Chord" section of *The Well-Tuned Piano*. I entitled these new subsections 'The Ethers Churn (The Dinosaurs Dance)', 'Young's Boogie in E<sub>7</sub>,' and 'Young's Böse Boogie in E<sub>7</sub>.'

It seems that it was around the time of the opening of the MUDIMA Foundation in Milan that I decided to use the title *Young's Blues* for the original genre of blues that I created in the late '50s and early '60s. Gino DiMaggio and the MUDIMA Foundation commissioned a permanent sculptural tableau realization of my



The Forever Bad Blues Band, American premiere performance series, The Kitchen, New York, January 14, 1993. Photos: Jim Conti. Photo Montage: La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela. Color assemblage: Jim Lynch





1960 composition *Piano Piece for David Tudor #1* to be featured in MUDIMA's inaugural exhibition, *Pianofortissimo*, which opened on January 11, 1990. At the opening, I not only performed *Piano Piece for David Tudor #1*, but also dedicated the sculpture with an impromptu piano improvisation performance of my early genre of blues which I called *Young's Dorian Blues in B*, at this time.

The first performance of The Forever Bad Blues Band was at the *invitational* Gramavision 10th Anniversary party in New York City on November 15, 1990 with Jon Catler, Electric Just Intonation and Fretless Guitar; Brad Catler, Electric Fretless Bass; Bob Muller, Drums; and myself, Korg M1 Synthesizer.

The *public* world premiere of the Forever Bad Blues Band was presented on March 1, 1992 at Ballhaus Naunynstrasse, Berlin, in honor of the 10th anniversary of Ursula Block's record shop-gallery, Gelbe Musik, with myself; Jon

Catler; Brad Catler; Jonathan Kane, Drums; and Marian Zazeela, Light Design. Following the Berlin premiere, the Band performed at the Batschkapp in Frankfurt, Szene Wien in Vienna, The Loft in Munich, Posthof in Linz and at the Audio Arts Festival at Korzo Theatre in The Hague.

In Summer 1992, The Forever Bad Blues Band performed the featured opening concert in a special setting of Marian Zazeela's slide projection series, *Ornamental Lightyears Tracery* for the *Pop Goes Art, Andy Warhol and The Velvet Underground* exhibition in Augsburg, and then played the first public concert to open the Forum at the new Bundeskunsthalle in Bonn.

This 93 | 14 performance of *Young's Dorian Blues in G* was recorded at the January 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 17, 1993 Forever Bad Blues Band American premiere six-concert series presented by MELA Foundation at The Kitchen.

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## La Monte Young

La Monte Young has pioneered the concept of extended time durations in contemporary music for over 35 years. He contributed extensively to the study of just intonation and to the development of rational number based tuning systems which are used in his periodic composite sound waveform environments, as well as in many of his major performance works. Presentations of Young's work in the U.S. and Europe, as well as his theoretical writings, gradually influenced a group of composers to create a static, periodic music which became known as Minimalism. *Musician Magazine* stated, "as the acknowledged father of minimalism and guru emeritus to the British art-rock school, his influence is pervasive," and the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* wrote, "for the past quarter of a century he has been the most influential composer in America. Maybe in the world."

In L.A. in the '50s Young played jazz saxophone, leading a group with Billy Higgins, Dennis Budimir and Don Cherry. He also played with Eric Dolphy, Ornette Coleman, Terry Jennings, Don Friedman and Tiger Echols. At Yoko Ono's studio in 1960 he directed the first New York loft concert series. He was the editor of *An Anthology* (NY 1963), which with his *Compositions 1960* became a primary influence on concept art and the Fluxus movement. In 1962 Young founded his group, The Theatre of Eternal Music, and embarked on *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys* (1964- ), a large work involving improvisation within strict pre-determined guidelines. Young played soprano saxophone and sang with the group. Terry Riley,

John Cale, Tony Conrad, Jon Hassell, Jon Gibson, Lee Konitz, David Rosenboom, Marian Zazeela and Angus MacLise are among those who worked in this group under Young's direction.

With Marian Zazeela in the '60s he formulated the concept of a *Dream House*, a permanent space with sound and light environments in which a work would be played continuously. Young and Zazeela have presented works in sound and light worldwide, from music and light box sculptures to large-scale environmental installations, culminating in two Dia Art Foundation realizations: the 6-year continuous 6-story Harrison Street *Dream House* (NYC 1979-85) and the 1-year environment *The Romantic Symmetry (over a 60 cycle base)* in *Prime Time from 112 to 144 with 119 / Time Light Symmetry* (22nd Street NYC 1989) within which Young presented *The Lower Map of The Eleven's Division in The Romantic Symmetry (over a 60 cycle base)* in *Prime Time from 112 to 144 with 119* with the Theatre of Eternal Music Big Band. This 23-piece chamber orchestra consisted of 4 voices, 5 trumpets in Harmon mutes, 2 tenor trombones, 2 bass trombones, 3 horns, 3 tubas, 2 sustained electric guitars, and 2 sustained electric basses, and was the largest Theatre of Eternal Music ensemble to appear in concert to date. As the first western disciple of renowned master vocalist Pandit Pran Nath, Young has performed and taught the Kirana style of Indian classical music since 1970.

The 1974 Rome live world premiere of Young's magnum opus *The Well-Tuned Piano* (1964-73-81-present), was celebrated by a commission for him

to sign the Bösendorfer piano which remains permanently in the special tuning. Gramavision's full-length recording of the continuously evolving 5-hour-plus work has been acclaimed by critics to be "the most important and beautiful new work recorded in the 1980s," "one of the great monuments of modern culture" and "the most important piano music composed by an American since the *Concord Sonata*." At the 1987 MELA Foundation La Monte Young 30-Year Retrospective he played the work for a continuous 6 hours and 24 minutes.

In 1990 Young formed The Forever Bad Blues Band, and in 1992 the group toured extensively in Germany, Austria and Holland, performing two-hour continuous concerts of *Young's Dorian Blues*, with Young, keyboard, Jon Catler, just intonation and fretless guitar, Brad Catler, bass, Jonathan Kane, drums, and Marian Zazeela, light design. In 1991 Gramavision released the CD performance by The Theatre of Eternal Music Brass Ensemble, led by Ben Neill, of one of Young's most important early minimal works, *The Melodic Version* (1984) of *The Second Dream of The High-Tension Line Stepdown Transformer* from *The Four Dreams of China* (1962).

## Marian Zazeela

Marian Zazeela is one of the first contemporary artists to use light as a medium of expression. In over three decades of work, Zazeela has exhibited a consistent iconographic vision in a variety of media encompassing painting, calligraphic drawing, graphics, film, light projection, sculpture and environment.

Expanding the traditional concepts of painting and sculpture while incorporating elements of both disciplines, she has developed a unique visual language in the medium of light by combining colored light mixtures with sculptural forms to create seemingly three-dimensional colored shadows in radiant vibrational fields. Light and scale are manipulated in such a way that the colored shadows, in their apparent corporeality, become indistinguishable from the sculptural forms, enveloping the viewer in the continual interplay of reality and illusion. Her work has taken the directions of performance in *Ornamental Lightyears Tracery*, sculpture in the series *Still Light* and recent neon pieces, and environment in *Dusk/Dawn Adaptation*, *Magenta Day / Magenta Night* and her major work *Light*.

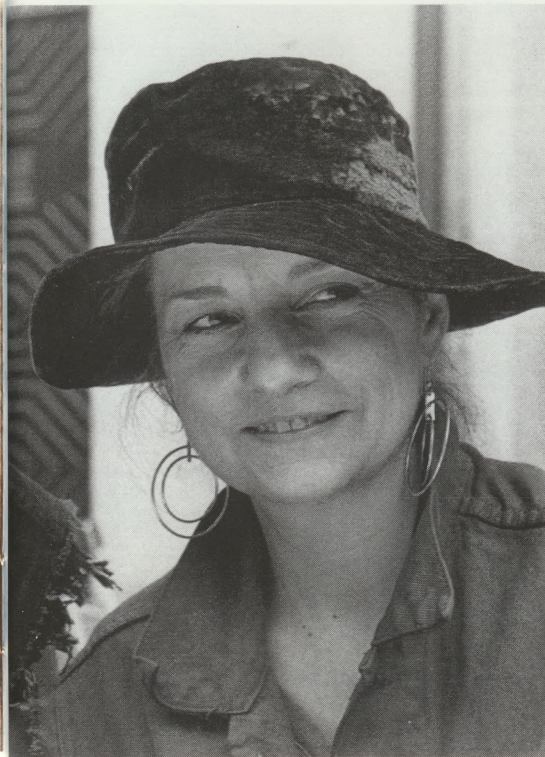
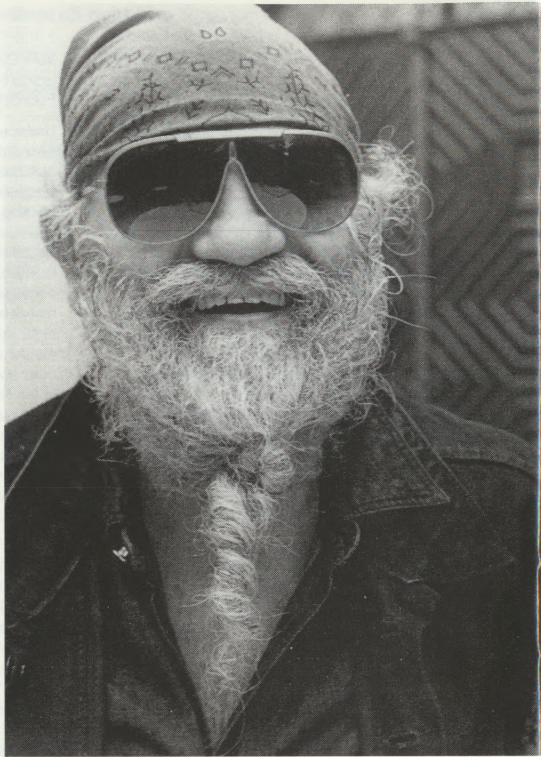
As artistic director of The Theatre of Eternal Music she creates the works that form the innovative visual components of *Dream House*, a sound and light work in which she collaborates with composer La Monte Young. Zazeela has presented *Dream Houses*, light installations, performances and calligraphic drawing exhibitions throughout the United States and Europe. Recent installations include the Ruine der Künste, Berlin, the 44th Venice Biennale, Galerie Hans Mayer, Düsseldorf, MELA Foundation's "La Monte Young 30-Year Retrospective," New

York City, and Kunstverein Köln. She has received grants from the NEA, EAT, CAPS, Lannan Foundation and Cassandra Foundation.

Under a long-term commission from the Dia Art Foundation (1979-85), Zazeela and Young collaborated in a 6-year continuous *Dream House* presentation set in the 6-story Harrison Street building in New York City featuring multiple interrelated sound and light environments, exhibitions, performances, research and listening facilities, and archives. *Arts Magazine* described the centerpiece of this installation: "There is a retreat to reverie as if one were staring up into the summer night sky. *The Magenta Lights* is experienced as a meteorological or astronomical event, a changing color display above one's head, like an art equivalent of the Northern Lights." And *Artforum* wrote: "Zazeela transforms material into pure and intense color sensations, and makes a perceptual encounter a spiritual experience. *The Magenta Lights* is an environmental piece in every sense of the word. What Zazeela has represented is the subtle relationship between precision and spirituality."

Zazeela's one-year sound and light environment collaboration with Young, *The Romantic Symmetry* (over a 60 cycle base) in *Prime Time* from 112 to 144 with 119 / *Time Light Symmetry* (Dia Art Foundation, 22nd Street, NYC 1989) has been acclaimed by *Village Voice* critic Kyle Gann as "some of the strangest and most forward-looking art New York has to offer." Her 1990 Donguy Gallery, Paris exhibition of light works was purchased by the French Cultural Ministry National Foundation of Contemporary Art for permanent installation in France.





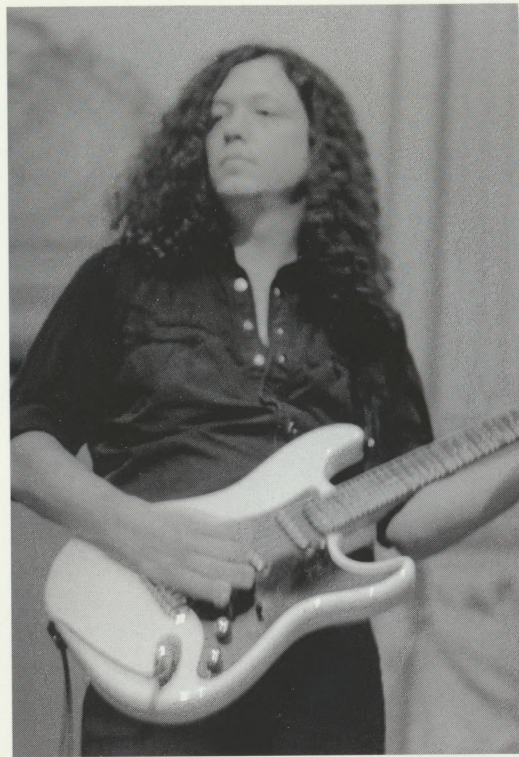
La Monte Young and  
Marian Zazeela, The  
Forever Bad Blues Band  
Tour, *Pop Goes Art*, Andy  
Warhol and The Velvet  
Underground Exhibition,  
Augsburg, Germany,  
August 1992. Photo ©  
Ulrich Wagner 1992.



## Jon Catler

Jon Catler, electric just intonation and fretless guitar, has been composing in microtonal tuning systems since 1978 and is a founding member of The Forever Bad Blues Band. A graduate of Berklee College of Music, Catler offered the first-ever microtonal concert at that institution. In 1985, he designed his own just intonation fingerboard for guitar which uses 49 notes per octave. He performed the world premiere of the Just Intonation Version of La Monte Young's *for Guitar* in Venice, Italy in 1986, and the New York premiere in 1987. He was assistant piano tuner in Young's 1987 concert series of *The Well-Tuned Piano* for the La Monte Young 30-Year Retrospective, studying the piece for a future guitar version, and he also formed and led the sustained electric guitar and bass section for Young's The Theatre of Eternal Music Big Band 1990 5-Concert world premiere of *The Lower Map of The Eleven's Division In The Romantic Symmetry (over a 60 cycle base) in Prime Time from 112 to 144 with 119*. Catler played the German premiere of the Just Intonation Version of *for Guitar* and, with his brother Brad Catler on fretless bass, played the world premiere of the Just Intonation Version

of Young's *Sarabande* in Munich in 1992. Catler has appeared as composer and performer on the Futurismo/Futurismi Festival, Manca Festival, New Music America, Strasbourg Musica Festival, Montreal Jazz Festival and American Festival of Microtonal Music, of which he was also a co-founder. He has recorded and performed throughout Europe and the U.S. with two just intonation rock bands, The Microtones and Steel Blue. He can be heard on The Microtones' recording *Cowpeople* on the M-Tone label and on the just intonation CD, *Steel Blue*, on the Koch International label, both of which feature his own compositions. Catler has designed a just intonation bass guitar fingerboard for Steel Blue bassist Hansford Rowe which is being manufactured by the Warwick Bass Guitar Company. Brad Catler is playing the first prototype of this just intonation bass guitar as one of his instruments on this Forever Bad Blues Band recording. Jon Catler is also currently writing for his just intonation blues band, Bottlefinger, which features himself on guitar and vocals, Elizabeth Pressman on vocals, and Brad Catler on bass.

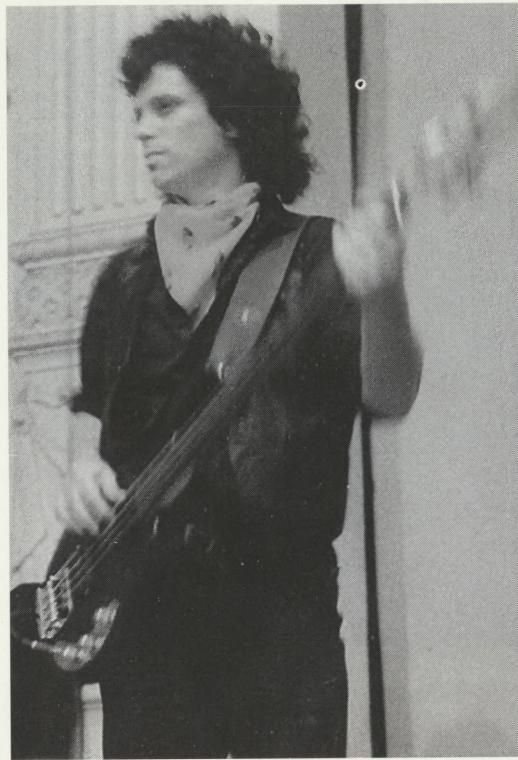


Jon Catler, The Forever Bad Blues Band world premiere performance, Gelbe Musik 10th Anniversary Celebration, Ballhaus Naunynstrasse, Berlin, March 1, 1992. Photo: © Anno Dittmer

## Brad Catler

Brad Catler, electric just intonation and fretless bass, is a multi-instrumentalist and composer and a founding member of The Forever Bad Blues Band. He experiments with different tunings on many instruments and has built and played his own Irish tin whistles using just tunings based on overtone-undertone series. He studied tabla with Alla Rakha and Zakir Hussein Khan, and sitar with Peter Rowe. He has played sitar for 14 years. He also studied sheng with T.N. Chang, director of the Chinese Ensemble. He plays bass with the just intonation rock band, The Microtones, and can be heard on their M-Tone label recording *Cowpeople*. He performed the world premiere of the Harry Partch work *December 1942* on fretless electric guitar, with Johnny Reinhard, voice, at the American Festival of Microtonal Music, Merkin Concert Hall, 1987. Catler is also a member of Young's The Theatre of Eternal Music Big Band

and played electric bass in the 1990 5-Concert world premiere of *The Lower Map of The Eleven's Division In The Romantic Symmetry (over a 60 cycle base) in Prime Time from 112 to 144 with 119*. He performed the world premiere of the Just Intonation Version of Young's *Sarabande* on fretless bass, with his brother Jon Catler on just intonation guitar, in Munich, 1992. He played tabla with La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela, voices and tamburas, for their performances of Indian classical raga at Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin and Lenbachhaus, Munich, 1992. A pedal steel specialist for over 12 years, in 1985 Catler began to break new ground on the instrument with improvisational compositions in original tunings, and in 1987 he created the "Del Monte" tuning in just intonation, inspired by *The Well-Tuned Piano*.



Brad Catler, The Forever Bad Blues Band world premiere performance, Gelbe Musik 10th Anniversary Celebration, Ballhaus Naunynstrasse, Berlin, March 1, 1992. Photo: © Anno Dittmer

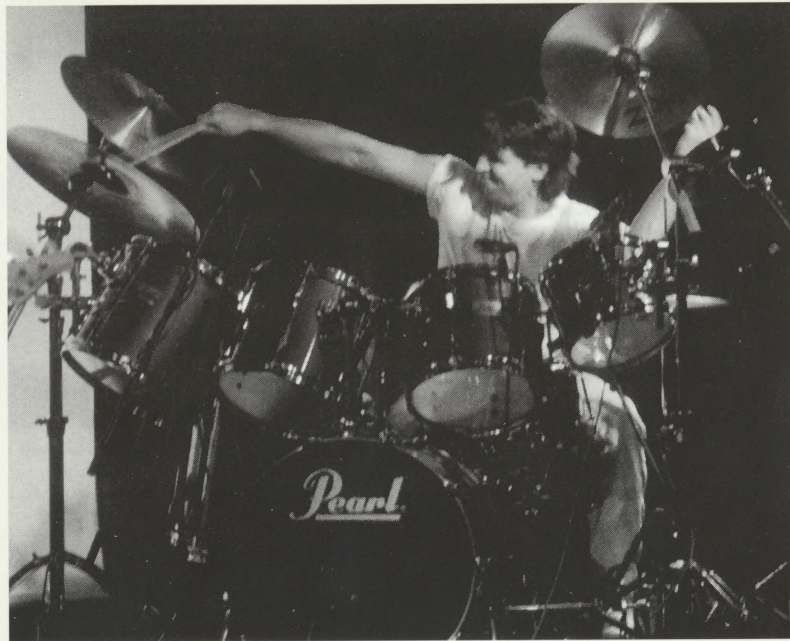


## Jonathan Kane

Jonathan Kane, drums, has toured extensively in Europe, the U.S., and Canada, currently with La Monte Young's Forever Bad Blues Band; Rhys Chatham's 100 electric guitar orchestra, which features Kane as the sole drummer; NYC band The Sirens; and guitarist Gary Lucas' Gods and Monsters. Also a composer, Kane's solos and duets have been performed in New York, Paris, Berlin and Montreal. Other groups and artists worked with include Elliott Sharp, John King, Tony Hymas, Annabouboula, Jac Berrocal, Jean Francois Pavros, and Swans, of which Kane was a founding member. He has composed for choreographers Bebe Miller, Lisa Fox, and the Phoenix Dance Co. of Leeds, England, and co-wrote music for the ABC News program 20/20. Kane began performing in 1974 with The Kane Bros. Blues Band, opening concerts for Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon, James Cotton, Koko Taylor, Dr. John and others. He studied at Berklee College of Music, and lives in NYC.

Selected performances include: The La Monte Young Forever Bad Blues Band Tours, Europe 1992, The Kitchen 1993; the Gary Lucas Gods and Monsters Tours, U.S. 1992, Europe 1993;

The Sirens Tour, Europe 1992; Musica Festival, Strasbourg 1991; Banlieues Bleues, Paris 1991; BAM Next Wave Festival, NYC 1990; New Music America, Montreal 1990; Edge of Music Festival, NYC 1990; Musique Action, Nancy 1990; L'Aeronef, Lille 1989; Printemps du Bourges 89; Aterforum Festival, Ferrara 1989; Solidarity Festival 89, Palermo; Serious Fun, Lincoln Center NYC 1988; Incontroazione Teatro Festival, Palermo 1988; Art Rock 88, St. Brieuc; MC93 Bobigny, Paris 1988; Ars Electronica, Linz 1987; Urban Aborigines, Berlin 1987; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis 1986; New Music America, Hartford 1984; Kitchen Tour U.S.A., 1982; Swans/Sonic Youth "Savage Blunder Tour," 1982. On disc, Kane is heard on the Swans CDs *EP*, *Filth*, and *Body to Body, Job to Job* (Young God Records), the *Speed Trials Compilation* with Elliott Sharp & Swans LP (Homestead Records), *Circus Mort EP* (Labor Records), Annabouboula CD *Greek Fire* (Shanachie Records), *The Sirens* (Cassette, Ecstatomatic Records), *101 Crustaceans CD* (Fang Records), the Electric World CD *Hot Thumb in a Funky Groove* (Enemy Records).



Jonathan Kane, The Forever Bad Blues Band world premiere tour 2nd concert, presented by 707 e.V., Batschkapp, Frankfurt, March 2, 1992. Photo: © Wolfgang Träger



Young's Dorian Blues in G composed by La Monte Young.  
Just Stompin' '93 I 14 ca. 8:54 - ca. 10:54:17 PM NYC" Young's Dorian Blues in G (B<sub>1</sub> = 60 Hz) (c. 1960-61-present) published by La Monte Young dba Just Eternal Music, exclusive administration by Editions Farneth International (410 W. 53rd St., #232, New York, NY 10019-5630), BMI.

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**Just Stompin'**

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Recorded Live and Mixed Direct to Digital in Concert at The Kitchen, New York, January 14, 1993,  
by Bob Bielecki.

Digitally mastered by Chris Muth.

All recording supervised by La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela, assisted by Jon Catler, Brad  
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Live concert sound production at The Kitchen by David Meschter.

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Thanks for technical support to Jamie Mereness, John Erskine, Tom Dale Keever and Ed Luke

For a complete works list and biography of La Monte Young, see the 28-page booklet accompanying  
the 5-hour recording of *The Well-Tuned Piano* (5-CD/Cassette, Gramavision 79452).

For more information about the publications and performances of La Monte Young, Marian Zazeela  
and The Forever Bad Blues Band please contact MELA Foundation, Inc., 275 Church Street, New  
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93:14 ca. 8:54 - ca. 10:54:17 PM NYC Young's Dorian Blues in G (B<sub>1</sub> = 60 Hz)

La Monte Young — Korg O1W Synthesizer in Just Intonation

Jon Catler — Electric Just Intonation and Fretless Guitar

Brad Catler — Electric Just Intonation and Fretless Bass

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60:23

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